



Minutes
Village of Arlington Heights
Board of Health
33 S. Arlington Heights Rd., AH 60005
Buechner Room
January 26, 2026
6:30 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Meservey called the meeting to order at 6:31 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.
Joseph Novak, Psy.D.
William Moran, M.D.
Ashley Bae, LCSC

Also Present

Mila Tsagalis, Commission Liaison
Lindsay Dohse, Nursing Supervisor
Kimberly Witt, Administrative Assistant
Darren Brown, Social Services Coordinator
Karuna Maddava, Resident
Star Hyams, Resident

Not Present

Shalu Gugnani, M.D.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A MOTION WAS MADE BY JOSEPH NOVAK PSY.D., TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 20, 2025, MEETING, SECONDED BY DR. MORAN AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

IV. REPORTS

A. Health & Human Services Director Update

Ms. Tsagalis stated that the Environmental Health Division experienced increased activity in January due to winter weather, including water main breaks and frozen pipes that affected restaurants, congregate housing, and a meal program. Staff

conducted safety inspections, including weekend work, to ensure affected operations could remain open safely.

She provided an update on the expansion of battery and paint recycling programs. The battery recycling expansion required operational changes and added portable and medium-format batteries to the accepted types. Health and Human Services continues to serve as a battery drop-off site, with new safety storage procedures and containment drums implemented. Public Works and the Fire Department assisted with safety measures, noting anticipated reductions in curbside battery disposal and fire risks. Staff inspect batteries upon receipt and safely store any damaged units, and public outreach is ongoing.

Ms. Tsagalis noted that the Environmental Health Commission is scheduled to meet to review the Village sustainability plan, which will be presented to the Village Board later in the year. She also reminded the Board that the Village conducts three paint collection events annually, with details for the next event to be communicated.

She provided an update from the Senior Commission, which met this evening. The Commission discussed adoption of a \$3,000 grant from the Wheeling Township Mental Health Board to support a Caregiver Connection and Resource Program, anticipated to begin in April. The pilot initiative is intended to expand caregiver support services, particularly for homebound individuals.

During discussion, Board members requested additional information on caregiver resources and program outcomes. Ms. Tsagalis explained that the program is limited in scope due to funding and that outcome data will not be immediately available. Discussion also included adult day care availability, costs, and waiting lists. Staff are exploring additional pilot initiatives for homebound residents, including a potential check-in call program in coordination with the library.

She outlined planning for the Senior Health and Fitness Day, scheduled for the last Wednesday in May, which will include preventive health screenings and educational opportunities in partnership with community and health care organizations.

Ms. Tsagalis highlighted Senior Center and library programming, including distribution of the Senior Services newsletter and the upcoming Wellness Resource Hour on February 5. Staff requested assistance with promotion of the event.

She also described ongoing Senior Services programs supporting individuals with Parkinson's disease and noted plans to recognize Parkinson's Awareness Month in April, including World Parkinson's Day on April 9.

Ms. Tsagalis concluded by reviewing the Senior Services Impact Report and a four-month promotional calendar included in the packet, noting that staff will continue to update the calendar as additional events are scheduled.

B. Nursing Services Update

Ms. Dohse stated that the fall vaccination season has concluded, noting increased participation compared to the prior year, with a total of 218 employees vaccinated.

Staff also administered 30 in-home COVID vaccinations, 35 high-dose influenza vaccinations, and conducted a vaccination clinic for Northwest Central Dispatch employees. She expressed satisfaction with overall vaccination uptake compared to national trends.

She noted that October was particularly busy, with over 100 home visits conducted—approximately 25 more per month than usual—representing the highest volume in recent years. Ms. Dohse and Community Nurse Natalie Austin attended a Minority Health Conference hosted by the Illinois Department of Public Health. In November, staff sponsored a community-wide food drive in response to SNAP benefit changes, collecting approximately 3,100 pounds of food. Donations were distributed among Elk Grove Township, Wheeling Township, St. Edna's, and Lutheran Church of the Cross, where Village staff conduct outreach twice monthly.

Ms. Dohse highlighted ongoing community outreach and education, including instruction in infant CPR to a New Parent Meetup Group. She and Ms. Tsagalis participated in an emergency response training with Village leadership and the Fire Department. Additionally, Ms. Dohse attended meetings of the Northwest Food Access Coalition, a collaborative effort with the Cook County Department of Public Health and the University of Illinois aimed at improving food access for underserved populations.

She provided an update on hearing and vision screenings, conducted at local private schools. Approximately 600 to 700 students have been screened to date, with additional screenings planned in February and April.

Ms. Dohse presented year-end highlights, noting increases in screening services. In 2025, staff conducted nearly 2,000 blood pressure screenings, approximately 400 blood sugar screenings, 112 cholesterol screenings, 190 A1C screenings, hearing and vision screenings for approximately 1,000 students, and approximately 900 home visits.

Looking ahead, Ms. Dohse outlined upcoming initiatives, including half-price cholesterol and hemoglobin A1c screenings in February, as well as a free cholesterol and A1c clinic for Village employees. She will present to a Parkinson's support group next month regarding services available to residents. Staff plan to restart the Fit and Strong program, an evidence-based exercise and education program for individuals with osteoarthritis, following strong participation in prior sessions.

Ms. Dohse noted that in May she will partner with the library and the Birth to Five Action Coalition to host a screening of the documentary *Butterfly in a Blizzard* on May 6 at 7:00 p.m., in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month. The documentary focuses on maternal mental health. She also stated that the New Parent Meetup Group was paused during flu season, with limited participation in virtual sessions, and is expected to resume next month with an in-person speaker on maternal mental health.

She added that she and Ms. Tsagalis are collaborating with Social Services and the Fire Department on a hoarding project currently under development.

Ms. Dohse requested Board feedback regarding the scope of vaccines offered to homebound residents. She noted that staff currently provide flu and COVID vaccinations but do not offer RSV, shingles, or pneumonia vaccines due to cost and billing limitations. Discussion followed regarding vaccine priorities, costs, and insurance billing. Ms. Dohse stated that RSV, shingles, and pneumonia vaccines are significantly more expensive and that Village staff are unable to bill insurance or Medicare directly. She noted that a pharmacy in Bartlett is able to provide flu, COVID, RSV, shingles, and pneumonia vaccines to homebound residents and can bill insurance and Medicare.

C. Social Services Update

Mr. Brown stated that Senior/ADA Social Worker Hannah Kane provided Narcan training to approximately 15 lead staff at the Arlington Heights Memorial Library in December. The training, held in advance of a new state law that went into effect on January 1, 2026, covered signs of opioid overdose, proper administration of Narcan, and appropriate response procedures. The session was intended to educate staff prior to the library maintaining a supply of Narcan, and additional trainings are planned in the future.

He reported that the Social Services Division participated in outreach at the Arlington Heights Memorial Library and local food pantries during the past quarter. In 2025, Social Services Coordinator Darren Brown met with 82 residents through library-based outreach, addressing needs related to mental health, housing, homelessness, employment, and various family situations. Nursing and Social Services staff continued to provide support at food pantries, assisting several individuals with rent-related needs. He also hosted a discussion at the library of the PBS documentary *Born Poor*, which followed the social and emotional challenges faced by children growing up in poverty over a fourteen-year period, providing approximately 18 attendees with insight into the long-term impact of economic hardship.

He indicated that the annual holiday program was successful, serving over 75 families with support from more than 70 community sponsors, including families, businesses, and churches. In total, over 400 community members participated in the event. In addition, the Division organized holiday meal drives at Thanksgiving and Christmas in partnership with the Fire Department, delivering meals to 24 resident families, many of whom were also impacted by recent SNAP changes.

He advised that new SNAP work requirements take effect on February 1. The Division has been assisting residents with completing the required documentation to verify disability status with the Illinois Department of Human Services, which provides exemptions for those who qualify. Residents who do not complete the forms will be required to meet the work or volunteer requirements, with a three-month exemption allowed within a three-year period.

Mr. Brown described that eight suburban municipalities continue to meet monthly as a consortium to coordinate services and responses for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The group is primarily composed of social services teams from each community and aims to collect information on local conditions and needs. He noted that, as reported by all participating communities, there

continues to be a significant shortage of resources for those experiencing homelessness in the northwest suburbs. The workgroup is exploring additional sources of support for residents and unhoused individuals and is considering proposals to increase or expand local services. In addition to regular meetings, members have met with local faith leaders, participated in the AHAND Legislative Breakfast with state legislators, and recently attended the Northwest Mayoral Roundtable in Des Plaines, which brought together municipal and state leaders focused on homelessness support. At the beginning of the year, the group implemented a standardized tracking form across all communities to better understand needs, gaps in services, and potential opportunities to enhance local support.

The Grief Support Group at the Arlington Heights Senior Center continues to maintain steady attendance, currently serving approximately 10 seniors weekly. The group has fostered strong social connections among participants, who have developed relationships outside of the support group sessions.

As part of the Career Discovery Program at Hersey High School, a junior interested in psychology will begin shadowing staff in the office this week and will continue through May. This follows a similar internship last year and provides students with hands-on experience in social services.

He addressed the Hopeful Cities initiative, noting that while it was previously discussed, it had been temporarily tabled due to a transition in the mayor's office and other priorities over the summer. He stated that the initiative remains on the agenda and has been incorporated into the division's goals, indicating that it is still an active consideration.

There were discussions regarding shelter and housing challenges in the northwest suburbs. Participants noted that temporary church-based emergency shelters provide around 40 beds but are limited in capacity, with few interim or long-term housing options available. The group discussed difficulties in accessing services, including barriers within the existing system and long waiting lists for subsidized housing, Section 8 vouchers, and other supportive programs.

Affordable housing options for low-income residents, veterans, and individuals with disabilities were also addressed, including the recently announced Full Circle Communities project, which will provide subsidized units. Challenges related to rising costs, eviction prevention, and limited behavioral health services were highlighted, along with ongoing efforts to track residents' needs and coordinate support. The discussions emphasized the need for improved coordination, data collection, and exploration of additional resources to better serve unhoused individuals and families in the region.

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Video Gaming Discussion

Ms. Tsagalis informed the Committee of a discussion that took place at the December 8 Committee of the Whole regarding video gaming in Arlington Heights. Video gaming is currently not permitted in the Village; however, during the Mayor's tenure, there have been requests from businesses to consider the regulation. As a result, a task force was formed to examine the potential benefits and drawbacks of allowing video gaming, and its findings were presented at that meeting. A copy of the relevant meeting minutes was included in the packet for reference.

Ms. Tsagalis summarized the key points of the discussion. Potential benefits included increased revenue for businesses, job creation, an additional entertainment option, and aligning Village regulations with surrounding communities that currently allow video gaming. Concerns included the inconsistency of video gaming as a reliable revenue source, potential public health and social service impacts, and the possibility that video gaming could disproportionately affect individuals of lower socioeconomic status or conflict with the Village's family-friendly image.

It was noted that no action has been taken and that there is currently no timeline for further action. The discussion focused on gathering information rather than advancing a policy decision. Ms. Tsagalis encouraged members to share perspectives, particularly related to public health, behavioral health, and social service impacts, noting that some members may have relevant experience from clinical or hospital settings.

Additional discussion highlighted concerns about the addictive design of electronic gaming machines, their psychological impact, and the potential normalization of gambling behaviors. Comparisons were made to other forms of gambling, including sports betting, and concerns were raised about limited state-level prevention and treatment resources. The overall discussion emphasized the importance of balancing economic considerations with potential community and public health impacts as the Village continues to evaluate the issue.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY JOSEPH NOVAK, PSY. D., TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE BOARD TO DELAY A VOTE ON ANY ACTION ON THE MATTER UNTIL ADEQUATE, EFFECTIVE AND SUFFICIENT RESEARCH ON PUBLIC HEALTH RISKS TO THE HEALTH THE RESIDENTS HAS BEEN COMPLETED, SECONDED BY MS. VANLANDEGHEM AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Tsagalis clarified that the flyer she was looking for pertains to the Memory Café, held at the library on Wednesdays. She also noted that the Youth Commission will be hosting a Job Fair in March and is seeking businesses to participate.

Members are encouraged to share this information with anyone who may be interested.

At the last meeting, a presentation by Link Together, part of Omni Youth Services, was delivered by a Youth Commissioner and Chris Zephyrs from Luther. The discussion highlighted the recent federal funding restoration supporting their counseling services. Previously, the presentation focused on unregulated THC hemp-derived products, their availability locally, and the implications of local ordinances.

The federal spending bill passed in November 2025, including provisions for a federal ban on certain THC derivative products by November 2026. While positive, there is concern about the interim period, as manufacturers may attempt to reclassify products. The ban will include Delta-8 and Delta-9 THC, but other substances, such as kratom and tianeptine, are not included. Local enforcement remains a challenge, and products may still be available in stores during this time.

Regarding e-bikes, Ms. Tsagalis reported that education materials are still in development, and the state may act this spring to standardize rules across communities. Until then, existing local ordinances remain in effect, though other municipalities are also enacting their own regulations.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

A public guest thanked the Chair and Board members and expressed appreciation on behalf of Village residents for the work of the Board and staff. The speaker introduced herself as Karuna Maddava, a longtime Arlington Heights resident and homeowner, a retired medical speech-language pathologist, and a co-founder of the Parkinson's Support Group at Northwest Community Hospital over 20 years ago.

Ms. Maddava urged the Committee to request that the Health and Human Services Department provide a new memo to the Village Board as a top priority regarding video gambling. She referenced a memo provided by Health & Human Services on September 18 at the request of the Video Gambling Task Force, noting that while the memo appropriately outlined concerns, only limited points were included in the task force's summary to the Board. She stated that key public health concerns—specifically that legalizing video gambling would create new gambling addictions and that video gambling terminals differ significantly from other forms of gambling—were not adequately conveyed.

She emphasized that video gambling terminals are algorithm-driven and designed to encourage prolonged and rapid play, often referred to as “electronic morphine”. She expressed concern over statements made during Board discussions that downplayed gambling addiction, characterizing such views as a “blame the victim” mentality. She asserted that addiction is not a matter of personal choice and cautioned against prioritizing revenue over resident health and well-being.

Ms. Maddava stated her understanding that the Village Board may vote on legalizing video gambling in the first quarter of 2026. She requested that a new Health and Human Services memo be issued detailing the negative health impacts of video gambling and clarifying that gambling addiction is a medical condition. She also asked that any vote be delayed allowing for further study of the potential impacts on the community, particularly on youth and vulnerable populations.

She cited examples from neighboring communities where video gambling is permitted, noting the visibility of gambling terminals in family-oriented establishments, and raised concerns about the potential scale of video gambling if introduced broadly in Arlington Heights. She concluded by stating that the health of community members is at stake and thanked the Board for its time and consideration.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MS. VANLANDEGHEM, SECONDED BY JOSEPH NOVAK, PSY.D. TO ADJOURN AT 8:16 P.M., ALL CONCURRED AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The next meeting will be held on April 27, 2026.