

Village of Creston Minutes
Tuesday, January 6, 2026

President Byro called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Trustees M. Hibshman, Elliot, Kerns, Hopkins, J. Hibshman, and Ward were present. Attorney Wilt was also present.

President Byro introduced the minutes from December 2, 2025. Trustee Kerns made a motion to approve the minutes. Trustee Elliot seconded the motion. Trustee Ward pointed out two typographical errors that Clerk Payton said she would correct. President Byro asked for a vote. All present votes to approve the minutes.

Visitors & Communications - President Byro asked about visitors. No one responded. He stated that he received a nice thank you from the library for the Village's donation toward Christmas in Creston.

President Byro also stated that the Village donated \$500 to Wreaths Across America as they were having a deal that expired on 12/31/25.

President Byro introduced Attorney Wilt. Attorney Wilt said that he had some bad news on the property condemnation for 209 W Depot St. The judge had to reschedule the hearing that was to take place 2 weeks prior as he was presiding over a month-long murder case. The earliest date he could reschedule for was the beginning of February. Attorney Wilt said that he had hoped to have everything wrapped up by the time of the meeting, but he was not able to due to the continuance. President Byro asked Atty Wilt if he had anything else and he said he did not. President Byro said he had talked to Aaron Moore about starting the demolition process by getting the letter sent out and he hoped that Atty Wilt could help them figure out who to send the letter to. President Byro said he wanted to get the project moving.

President Byro asked Aaron Moore if he had anything else. Aaron said that 2 more foundations were going in at the Subdivision. He said he had a rough-in on lot 14 and that lot 15 was to have another one soon. He said he expected more permits to be requested by Mr. Hayden soon. He said he stopped at 209 W Depot St and there was a for sale sign in the yard with a phone number on it. He said that he called the number and spoke to a gentleman who had purchased the taxes on the lots on each side of the house. Aaron explained that there are 3 lots: the lot that the house is on and a lot on either side of the house. Aaron said he told the gentleman that the Village was planning to condemn the house, and it didn't sound like the gentleman was going to file for the deed. Aaron also said that there is a management company sign in the window and he said he spoke to the management company, and they gave the name of a management firm who is handling things while the home is in foreclosure with HUD. He said that he has an address to send the letter to. Atty Wilt said he would compare it with the address he has and see if it's the same. President Byro asked if anyone had anything else for Aaron. No one said or asked anything.

President Byro then moved onto Committee Reports.

Finance - President Byro asked if Trustee Hopkins had anything. He said he did not.

Streets/Alleys/Sidewalks - Trustee Ward said the only thing he had was the Sidewalk Project. He said that the Board kept talking about the project but never talked about how much money they wanted to spend this year. President Byro said it would be discussed later in the meeting to decide what the Board wants to do. Trustee M. Hibshman said he was where he was at the previous meeting when the Board discussed using interest money earned so that the principal wouldn't be touched. Trustee M. Hibshman said that he thought it was about \$172,000 in interest earned. He said he felt that was a pretty good place to start. He said that they could then send it out for bids in the Spring and at least get started on Main Street. Trustee Kerns asked Trustee Ward how much concrete was going for last year. Trustee Ward said that last year 4" sidewalk was about \$15 per square foot. He said that would be about \$60 per running foot for 4" wide. Trustee Kerns said that would at least give them a place to start. Trustee Ward said that money will control what can be done. Trustee Kerns said the costs may be higher this year. He said it may be more like \$70 per running foot. Trustee Ward said that would just be for the sidewalks. He said that the accessibility ramps would run about \$25 per square foot. Trustee Kerns said that it might be more like \$80 per running foot. Trustee M. Hibshman took \$170,000 and divided it by \$80 and came up with about 2100 feet. Trustee M. Hibshman said that at least Main St could be taken care of as well as the previously discussed bad spots on South and Depot Streets. He referenced two areas of sidewalk and asked if they were about 60-80 feet each. Trustee Ward said that lots are typically 66 feet. Trustee M. Hibshman estimated that it would be about 250 feet and that the area of South Street that needs to be repaired is probably another 120 feet. Trustee Kerns said that a lot of sidewalks could be repaired and replaced for that money. Trustee Elliot asked if the goal was to modernize all the sidewalks to 4 feet wide. Trustee Ward said that the Village would have to as 4 feet is the minimum standard. Trustee Elliot said he understood that, but he was asking if all the sidewalks in the Village would be replaced. President Byro said that the bad ones would get done first for certain. Trustee M. Hibshman said that South and Depot Streets really need to be done first. Trustee Ward said that the Village would be better off if they keep the construction all in one area rather than have them pick up and jump around. Trustee M. Hibshman said there might not be a choice with the South and Depot repairs. Trustee Ward clarified that he meant to keep all the work in the same quadrant. Trustee Elliot said that they could start at the school and work down South Street. President Byro said he didn't think it needed to go that far. Trustee Kerns agreed that the sidewalk in front of the school was pretty decent. President Byro suggested started at the Lutheran Church and working east down South St. Trustee Ward said that he was pretty sure they stopped the Safe Routes to School right past the Clucas house on the corner of South and Main Streets. Trustee Kerns said that even the sidewalk on the south side of the street is in fairly decent shape. Trustee M. Hibshman reiterated that he felt the interest was the ideal place to get the funding from. Trustee Hopkins said he didn't know if it was an engineering thing, but he noticed that the ADA plate on the northeast corner of the school was about an inch and a half underwater. Trustee Kerns said that it happened on both sides of the school and it was talked about when it was done. Trustee Hopkins said that if the Village is going to spend the money, it needed to be

done right. President Byro suggested re-doing the corner by the school. Trustee M. Hibshman asked what everyone thought about where to source the money from and everyone agreed that the interest seemed like the best option. Trustee Ward suggested starting at \$150,000 and that would give a good cushion in case the bids come in a little high. If the Village gets good bids, then they can always add more replacement areas to the project. Trustee Ward said that the Village would have to do asphalt patching on the corners where the ramps are installed and landscape restoration, which is included in the price he quoted. Trustee Elliot asked what would happen with the old concrete. Trustee Ward said the price he quoted was for repair and replacement and that included disposal of the old concrete. Trustee M. Hibshman said he would talk to Treasurer Payton about how much interest has been earned. He said that someone said that the money would control how much work could be done, so it is better to get the money in place first.

President Byro asked if Trustee Ward had anything else and he said no.

Water & Sewer - Trustee Kerns said he had nothing new.

Health & Safety Trustee J. Hibshman said he had nothing new.

Zoning & Planning - Trustee Elliot said he had nothing. He said that they were going to give copies of the Comprehensive Plan to the commission members for their review.

Subdivision - Trustee Elliot said that the only thing he had to say about the subdivision was that it looked good and he was glad to see that they were still building houses.

President Byro brought up the Village Engineer. He said that he and Trustee Ward had put together a scenario and Trustee Ward said he had copies of it. He said that there is a Request for Qualifications that is about 4 pages long. He said that they hadn't heard from anyone at that point, but with the holidays that didn't surprise him. He said that any interested parties had until the end of January to submit something to the Village. He said that they would sit down and talk to whoever responded and see what they have to offer and what the Village is looking for. President Byro said he hoped to get 3-4 different engineering firms to respond. He said that Trustee Ward has sent the RFQ out to 4 or 5. Trustee Ward said that firms can also download it from the website.

Trustee Elliot asked the status of getting back the plans and prints from C.E.S.

President Byro said that he hadn't talked to them yet. He said he was still working with Jen Melnick on the Water Tower Project, and he said he would be addressing that later.

Old Business - President Byro talked about the Comprehensive Plan. He said that they had talked about setting up a meeting with the Board and the Planning Commission. He said that he and Trustee Elliot were getting together with some people on 1/15/26 to see if they could get them to come into town and get the Board going in the right direction. He said perhaps they could meet on a Saturday morning, and it would be more toward the end of January or beginning of February. He said he wanted to set up a meeting with the gentleman from U of I so that the Village can be heading in the right direction.

President Byro moved on to the Water Tower Project. He said that the electrician had been up there working when it was very cold. He said that all the controls have been installed. Once the mixer machine has been installed, he will have to go back and tie that all in. He said all the electrician's work was done for now. Curtis Loyd said that they told him that when they bring the mixer, all the wires are already there, so all they have to do is install it and connect the two wires and it's done. President Byro said the Village saved money using some of our own conduit so they didn't have to install new. He said that the project is through C.E.S. and he was working with Jen Melnick. President Byro said that even though Kevin no longer wants to be village engineer, he wants to keep working with Jen Melnick. He said she really knows her stuff and communicates regularly with the Village on progress of projects. Trustee Elliot asked if Jen Melnick was an employee of C.E.S. and he said that she is a project manager with them. He said that she had been the project manager for most of the projects that don't involve street repairs, so he would like to stay with her.

President Byro said that property condemnation had already been discussed.

President Byro moved on to the South Street Water Main Project. He said that Trustee Ward helped by talking with Martin & Sons, who won the bid. Trustee Ward asked about revising the plan by adding 6" valves and installing reducers. Trustee Ward said that he did a revised drawing showing updates made from the original project. Trustee Ward said he talked to the gentleman, and he told Trustee Ward that it was his first day back and he was swamped and he would get back to Trustee Ward later in the week. Trustee Ward said that there was no pay item for the 6 to 4 reducer and other items, so they will have to come back with a price. Trustee Ward said that he and Mr. Loyd thought that there were enough valves on South Street for them to isolate the corner without doing line stops. The line stop on the 10" main would be \$11,000. He said that with being able to eliminate some line stops and with the 10% contingency, he thinks the project can still be brought in within the original budget.

President Byro said it didn't sound like it would be a whole lot more. He said that they are nice people and that have been willing to work with the Village in the past.

Trustee Ward said that he had contacted the IEPA office in Chicago to follow up on permits. He said that they had the permits for the water tower mixer project but not for the water main project. He said that Willett Hoffman does a lot of work with Adam in Rochelle, and they agreed to put together an IEPA permit application for the Village. He said the gentleman at the IEPA said that review time for them is 90-days. He said this time of year they could probably get it done within 30-40 days but if the Village waited too long, then they will start getting a lot of applications for the upcoming construction season and it will take longer to review. Trustee Ward said it was important to get the permit application in ASAP or it could delay the project.

President Byro said that the IEPA is getting strict with permits and any kind of construction must have a permit. Trustee Ward said about the only thing they don't require permits for is emergency work. President Byro thanked Trustee Ward for all the work on that.

President Byro talked about security for Village Hall. He said that he has been in other municipal buildings. He said that the Rochelle City Council building has a metal detector now. He said that at Hillcrest, once you get in the front door that is as far as you get. He said that someone must buzz visitors in and that they have cameras. He said that he feels the security in Village Hall is too lax. He said he would like to get some cameras installed. He said he didn't know if the Village would need to buzz people in, but he would like to have an assessment done. President Byro said that Kristi Scherer's husband does that kind of work and he would like to have Mr. Scherer do an assessment. Trustee Ward asked if President Byro was looking to have an alarm installed that would go off if someone broke in. President Byro said that would be part of it. Trustee Ward said to make fire detection a part of that because he felt Village Hall could burn a long time at 3am before anyone noticed it. President Byro said he wanted to get started on that and get some prices. Trustee Elliot recommended going to the new library and seeing what they have. He said that Kristi Scherer, the former librarian, had walked him through all of it and he thinks they did a really nice job.

Trustee Ward brought up First Amendment auditors and asked if anyone knew what that was. President Byro said he did not. He said that they come into public buildings and if there is not a sign on a door stating that that area is restricted, they will say it is a public building funded by taxpayer dollars and they get their cameras out and start filming. He said that they could walk in and walk right into President Byro's office. Trustee Ward said all that would need to be done is put signs up that say "No Public Access" and that should solve the problem.

President Byro said that in Hillcrest, there is a second door. She has a camera and intercom so she can see who it is and ask them what they need and then she would buzz them in. He said that there is a code box and that each Trustee has his or her own code to access the building whenever they want or need to. Trustee Kerns asked if they had to let people come in within a certain distance. Attorney Wilt said confirmed that people cannot be locked out entirely when the building is "open". Trustee Ward asked if President Byro was considering building a second door and he said he didn't know if that was necessary or not. Attorney Wilt said that theoretically there could be a lock on the front door with the buzzer system, but you can't bar people access just because you don't want them in the building. He said that they went through that in another community he represents. He said that they were having belligerent people coming into the office, so they installed a buzzer system so they can screen people ahead of time. He said if you have communication, that helps take care of some of it. He said that if someone wants to lodge a complaint but their behavior is concerning, they can take the complaint through the communications system and have a record of it. President Byro said that a locksmith from Rochelle does a lot of security work. Trustee M. Hibshman said that ADT is pretty reasonable. He said they installed everything for free and they pay about \$74 per month. He said that they put in the buzzer door systems. President Byro said he wanted to look into it if it was all right. The Board agreed.

President Byro said he had nothing else and asked if anyone else had anything they wanted to bring up. Trustee M. Hibshman said he wanted to circle back and talk about tax revenue. He said he was looking on the budget paper and he asked if the money market revenue was \$108,000? Trustee Hopkins said yes. He then directed the Board

Members to the second line from the bottom that showed interest of \$107,000. Trustee Hopkins said that the Village has the Holcomb Bank account and the State of Illinois account, which pays a little bit higher interest rate than the bank offers. Trustee M. Hibshman said he assumed that the budget listed is what the Village expects to get in 2026. He said he knows the actual doesn't match as the year just started. He said that it appears the Village will get about \$215,000 in interest, so the \$150,000 that Trustee Ward mentioned is just about on the money. Trustee Ward said that they would have to talk to Treasurer Payton to make sure that none of that interest money is earmarked for running the Village as the Village doesn't get squat from property taxes. Trustee Hopkins said that the tax levy was about \$28,000 for next year. Trustee M. Hibshman asked if that was the income tax line. Trustee Kerns said he thought it was real estate tax. Trustee Hopkins said that real estate tax was 5th line up and it was \$32,020. Trustee M. Hibshman where the income tax line comes from. Trustee Ward asked if the Village gets a tiny amount of the state's income tax. Trustee M. Hibshman said he would check with Treasurer Payton.

President introduced the bills. President Byro noted that Mr. Lockard finally submitted his bill. Trustee Kerns made a motion to pay the bills. Trustee M. Hibsman seconded the motion. Trustees J. Hibshman, Ward, Elliot, M. Hibshman, Kerns and Hopkins voted yea. Bills were approved.

President Byro asked if anyone else had anything to bring up. No one did.

Trustee Ward made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Hopkins seconded the motion. Meeting ended at 7:30:19 pm.